



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT
Planning Board Meeting of July 11, 2013

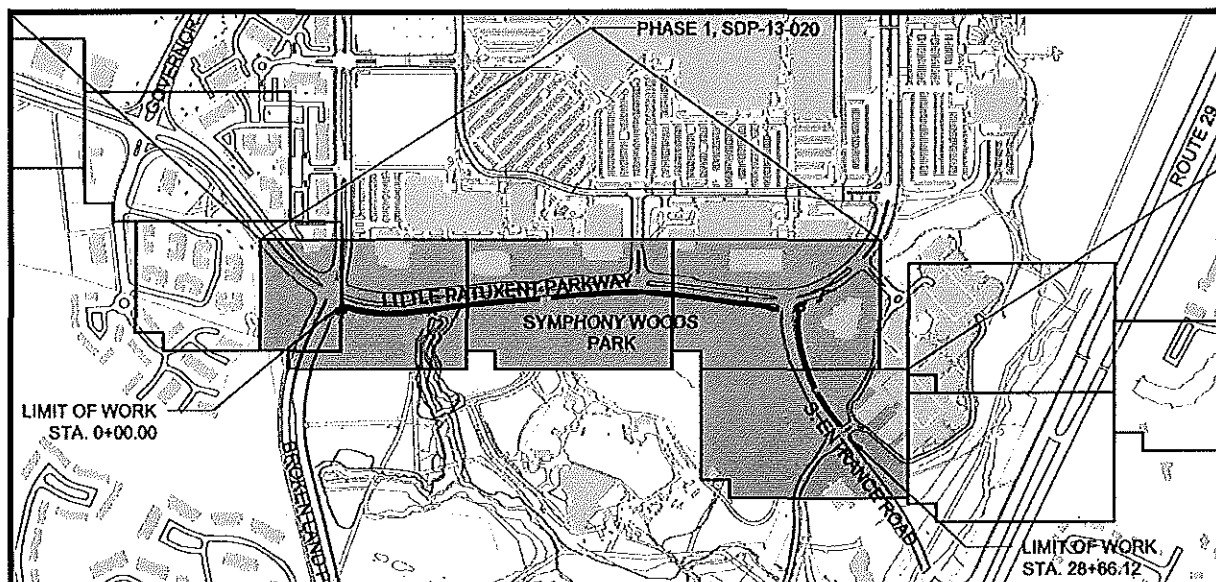
Plan: SDP-13-020, Downtown Columbia Multi-Use Pathway

Petitioner: The Howard Hughes Corporation

Request: The request is for Planning Board approval of Site Development Plan SDP-13-020, consisting of construction of Phase 1 of the Downtown Columbia Multi-Use Pathway. The project is proposed in order to satisfy, in part, Community Enhancement, Program and Public Amenities (CEPPA) 12 of the Downtown Columbia Plan (see Site History, below.).

DPZ Recommendation: Approval.

Location: The proposed pathway is generally located on the south side of Little Patuxent Parkway between Broken Land Parkway and South Entrance Road, and on the east side of South Entrance Road between Swift Stream Place and Little Patuxent Parkway in Columbia Town Center. The properties are zoned presently as NT – OS (New Town - Open Space) and Downtown Parkland (Symphony Woods Park) and cumulatively are 20.68 acres in area. Vicinal properties are occupied by commercial and residential uses.



Vicinity Map
SDP-13-020, Downtown Columbia Multi-Use Pathway
Phase 1

Site History:

- 04/06/2010: Council Bill 59-2009 made effective as part of the NT Zoning Regulations. The amendment included the requirement that prior to certain phases of the Downtown Revitalization Phasing Plan that certain Community Enhancements, Programs and Public Amenities (CEPPA's) would be implemented. The following CEPPA pertains to SDP-13-020:
 - CEPPA 12: ["Prior to issuance of a building permit for the 500,000th sf of development:"]
"GGP will complete at its expense (i) the pedestrian and bicycle pathway from the existing Route 29 pedestrian bridge to Oakland Mills Village Center and to Blandair Park; ii) the pedestrian and bicycle pathway from the existing Route 29 pedestrian bridge to the Crescent and Merriweather-Symphony Woods neighborhoods, inclusive of the pathway located between the Town Center Apartments and Route 29; and (iii) the pedestrian and bicycle pathway from the Crescent and Merriweather-Symphony Woods neighborhoods to Howard Community College and Howard County General Hospital." CEPPA 12 also addresses the development of pathway maintenance standards and responsibilities as well as renovation of the existing Route 29 pedestrian bridge. Maintenance and responsibilities for this phase of the pathway were discussed during plan review and continue to be negotiated. Renovation of the existing Route 29 pedestrian bridge is not part of the scope of this phase of the pathway project.
- 10/22/2012: Site Development Plan SDP-13-020 submitted to the Department of Planning and Zoning ("Department") by Petitioner.
- 06/06/2013: Petitioner notified by Department that the plan may be approved subject to Planning Board approval.

Site Improvements - Proposed site improvements include construction of a ten-foot wide path including wayside amenities adjacent to eastbound Little Patuxent Parkway from Broken Land Parkway to South Entrance Road, and adjacent to northbound South Entrance Road from Little Patuxent Parkway to Swift Stream Place in Downtown Columbia.

Environmental Considerations – A portion of the project is proposed in a stream buffer and wetland buffer; a retaining wall is proposed to minimize impacts to these areas. The Department determined that impacts to the stream buffer and wetland buffer resulting from the project are necessary in accordance with Subsection 16.116(c)(1) of the Howard County Code.

Forest Conservation – In accordance with Subsection 16.1202(b)(iv) the plan is exempt from forest conservation requirements. Even so, since the project for the most part utilizes the alignment of an existing sidewalk, few trees or forest resources will be impacted, and steps have been taken to minimize impacts to the forest resources adjacent to the path alignment.

Landscaping - The project complies with the Howard County alternative compliance provision of the Howard County Landscape Manual. Landscape plantings are proposed at waysides and at select locations along the path opposite Little Patuxent Parkway. Alternative compliance was

found suitable by the Department due to the linear nature of the project, difficulties posed by planting between the path and Little Patuxent Parkway and South Entrance Road, and property ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

Evaluation and Conclusions – The site development plan complies with the applicable and relevant Planning Board review and approval criteria [Zoning Regulations (ZR) Subsection 125.H.3.] as follows:

1. The development conforms with the adopted Downtown Columbia Plan. [ZR Subsection 125.H.3.a.]

Pursuant to Section 125.A of the New Town Regulations, when a provision requires conformance to the Downtown Columbia Plan, the action taken shall further, and not be contrary to, the following items in the Downtown Columbia Plan:

- a. Policies;
- b. Timing and implementation of the Plan;
- c. Timing of development;
- d. Development patterns;
- e. Land uses; and,
- f. Densities and intensities.

The SDP proposes construction of the Phase 1 Pathway in accordance with the Downtown Columbia Plan. The Phase I Pathway is a significant community recreation feature that will promote walking and bicycling and increased community interaction. When completed, the pathway system described in the Downtown Columbia Plan will connect activity and employment centers including Howard County General Hospital and Howard Community College with the new features downtown and with the regional recreation facilities at Blandair Regional Park. This SDP will create the first segment in that overall pedestrian and bicycle network.

2. The development implements and conforms to the approved Final Development Plan or Final Development Plan Amendment including all applicable Final Development Plan approval criteria and conditions. [ZR Subsection 125.H.3.b.]

The SDP conforms to the Shared-Use Path Design Guidelines approved as part of FDP-DC-MSW-1 and the applicable criteria found in FDP-139-A-III.

3. The development is well-organized in terms of the location of buildings and structures, downtown community commons, landscaping, pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems, and other Downtown Revitalization features. [ZR Subsection 125.H.3.c.]

The Phase 1 Pathway is designed to conform to the overall alignment anticipated by the Downtown Columbia Plan. Considerable effort has been made to minimize third-party property impacts and to minimize environmental impacts. Trail heads (waysides) have been designed to be attractive and functional as potential gathering places.

4. If the development provides Downtown Community Commons and/or Downtown Parkland, they are reasonable and appropriate given the location, scale and anticipated intensity of adjacent uses in accordance with the Downtown Columbia Plan. [ZR Subsection 125.H.3.d.]

As noted above, new Downtown Community Commons are being provided in connection with the SDP. These spaces are comprised of the enhanced trail waysides located along the Phase 1 Pathway. The location of the trail waysides is appropriate and consistent with the overall Phase 1 alignment and intended use.

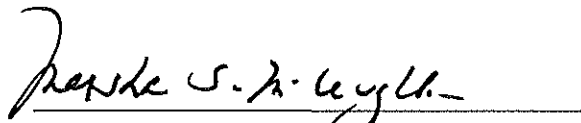
5. The development indicates the manner in which any land intended for common or quasi-public use, but not proposed to be in public ownership, will be held, owned and maintained in perpetuity for the indicated purposes. [ZR Subsection 125.H.3.i.]

As noted above, the Columbia Association, Petitioner and Howard County have agreed on the deeds of easement for construction and maintenance of the pathway.

SRC Action: The DPZ, Division of Land Development, by letter dated June 6, 2013, notified the petitioner that the site development plan revision may be approved, subject to Planning Board approval.

The file for this project is available for public review at the Department of Planning and Zoning's public service counter, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Recommendation: The DPZ recommends approval of Site Development Plan SDP-13-020.


Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning

6/24/13
Date

MSM:DBB:dbb